Met Office

April 2015

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1981-2010.

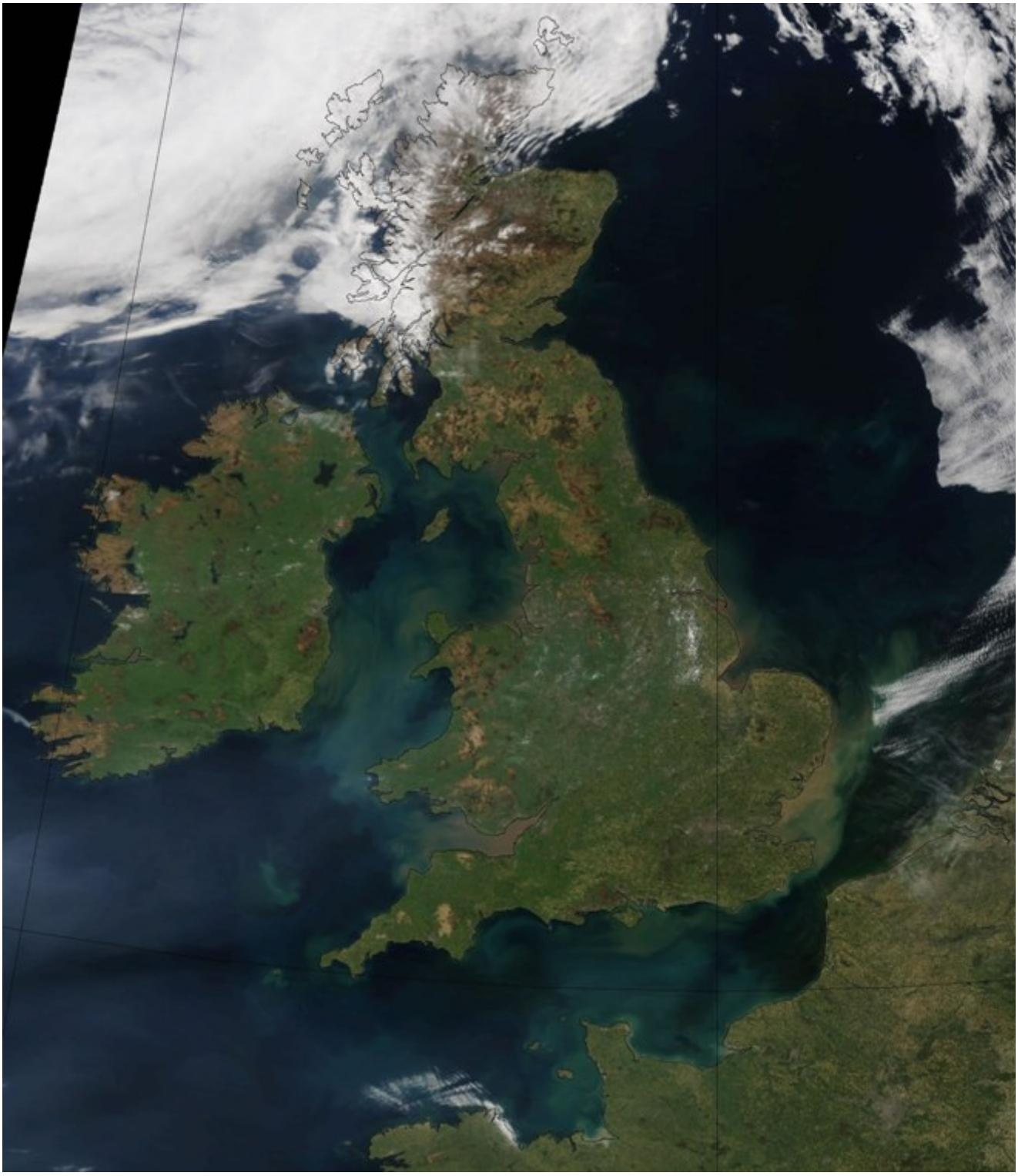
UK overview

At the start of the month, the UK was in a rather unsettled weather type, but within a few days a much more settled pattern became established under the influence of high pressure. This was interrupted for a few days towards mid-month, followed by more fine weather with some very warm days and plenty of sunshine across many areas. However, the final six days of the month were unsettled and cold with some sharp frosts and snow across high ground in the north.

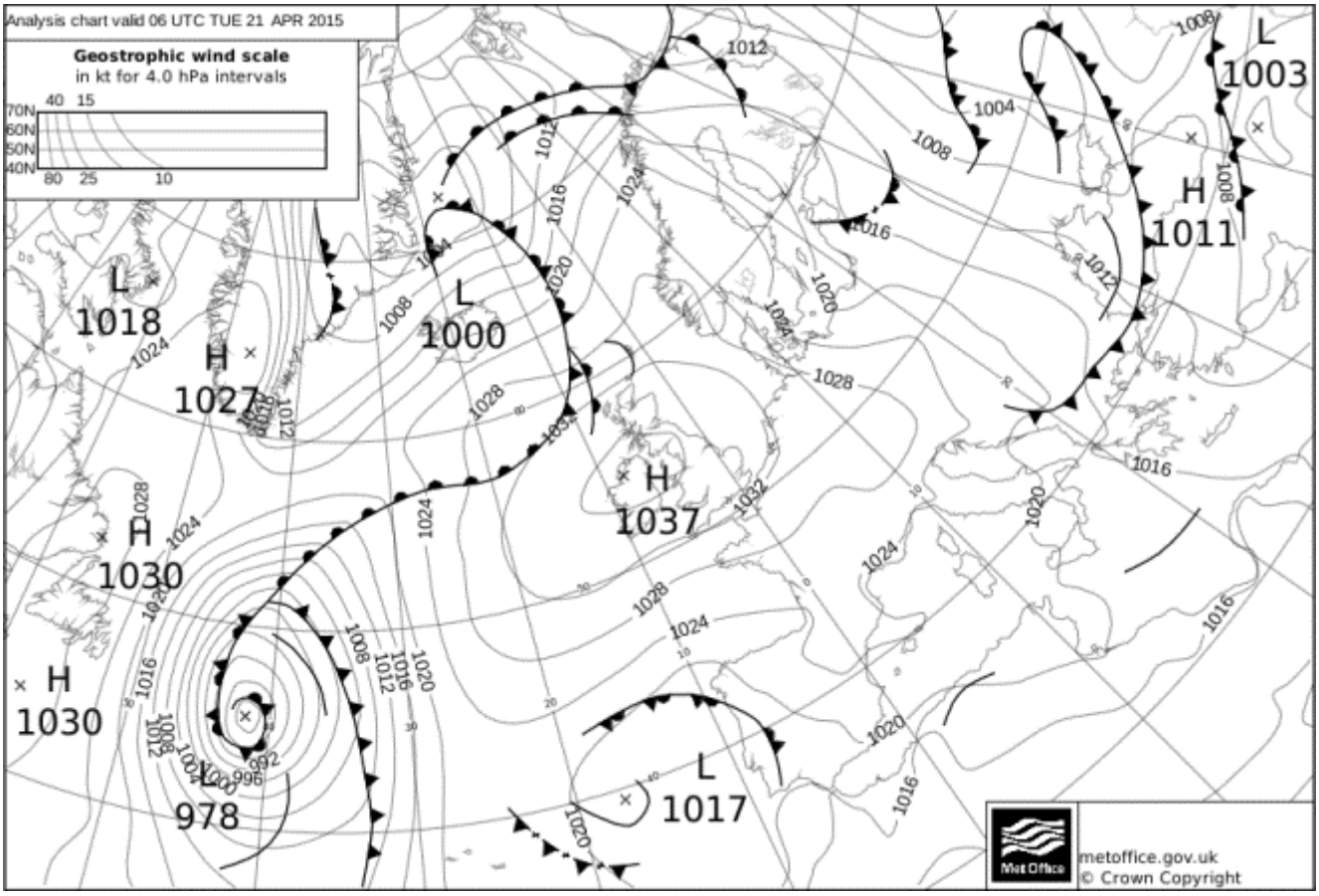
The UK mean temperature for April 2015 was 7.9 °C, which is 0.5 °C above the 1981-2010 long-term average. It was mildest relative to average from the English Midlands south-westwards. Southern and eastern areas were driest, with less than half the average rainfall for most areas and less than 20% in a few places, whereas northern and western Scotland had near-average rainfall for the month. The overall UK rainfall total was 63% of average. Sunshine was well above normal in most areas, and the UK received 144% of average sunshine hours, making it the sunniest April in a series from 1929.

A maximum temperature of 25.6 °C was recorded at Faversham (Kent) on the 15th. A minimum temperature of -8.0 °C was recorded at Katesbridge (County Down) on the 27th. In the 24 hours ending at 0900 GMT on the 14th, 65.2 mm of rain fell at Alltdearg House (Isle of Skye). A wind gust of 76 mph was recorded at Capel Curig (Gwynedd) on the 12th. A snow depth of 6 cm was recorded at Aviemore (Inverness-shire) at 0900 GMT on the 1st.

This satellite image at 1046 GMT on 21 April 2015 shows high pressure dominating the weather, with cloud-free skies across the UK except the far north-west of Scotland. Copyright Met Office / NASA.



The analysis chart at 0600 GMT on 21 April 2015 shows the area of high pressure centred over the UK and Ireland, with weak fronts to the north-west of Scotland.



Weather impacts

Much of the month was quiet in terms of weather-related impacts and disruption. There was an incidence of very poor air quality on the 9th and 10th. Warm still conditions, combined with traffic fumes, pollution from Europe and Saharan dust were all factors with central, eastern and south-east England worst affected. Advice was given to avoid strenuous outdoor activity due to high concentrations of nitrogen dioxide. Similar air pollution problems occurred previously in early April 2014.

Strong winds affected central and northern parts of England and Wales during the 12th, and the western Highlands of Scotland had heavy rain on the 13th, but causing only minimal disruption.

After a quieter spell of weather, cold air spread southwards across the UK during the 25th, with some sharp overnight frosts to follow, and significant fresh falls of snow over Scottish mountains. For the night of the 26th/27th icy conditions affected much of the Grampians and east Highlands, at the end of an otherwise quiet month.

England diary of highlights

The month began unsettled with some rain, but the weather soon became dry and warmer as pressure rose. After a brief unsettled spell approaching mid-month, it was again settled with high pressure, and warm by day, until the last few days of the month which were distinctly chillier and showery.

The mean temperature for the month was 0.8 °C above the 1981-2010 long-term average; maxima were well above average but minima were very close to average. Away from the north-west, rainfall was below average, by a considerable margin for many places with a few stations reporting less than 20% of average, and an

overall figure for England of 44% of average. It was a sunny month, with 142% of average sunshine overall, and the sunniest April in a series from 1929.

1st to 3rd:

The 1st was mainly cloudy, with outbreaks of rain spreading eastwards during the day, and it felt cool in a north-west wind. The 2nd was generally drier and brighter for most of the country, but Devon and Cornwall saw some light rain. Rain covered most areas on the 3rd but it cleared from the north later.

4th to 10th:

There were just a few isolated showers on the 4th, many places remaining dry as pressure rose. Dry again on the 5th apart from some early showers in the south-east. After a foggy start on the 6th for many areas, it became dry and bright. Fog again for most areas early on the 7th but otherwise it was dry and bright again. High pressure continued to dominate on the 8th and 9th which were dry and bright days. The 10th saw isolated showers develop over central and eastern areas but many places remained dry and warm, with St James's Park (Central London) recording 21.9 °C.

11th to 12th:

Overnight rain cleared the east by mid-morning on the 11th to leave a mainly dry and bright day, but it felt much cooler in a brisk westerly wind. An area of rain in the north moved slowly southwards during the day on the 12th, although the far south remained dry.

13th to 24th:

High pressure re-established itself on the 13th until the 24th to give a sequence of mainly dry, sunny and warm days with maximum temperatures regularly above 20 °C and peaking at 25.6 °C at Faversham (Kent) on the 15th.

25th to 30th:

The 25th saw a breakdown with rain spreading from the north-west during the day, introducing much colder air and with increasing winds; the midday temperature at Shap (Cumbria) was only around 3 °C. The rain cleared the south-east during the morning of the 26th to leave a bright day, but with showers in the far north and south. The 27th was unsettled with widespread showers developing during the day, wintry on high ground in the north and thundery in Cumbria. The 28th was a day of sunshine and scattered showers, the heaviest showers in the north with isolated hail and thunder. A band of overnight rain cleared the east during the morning of the 29th leaving a bright day with a scattering of showers. The 30th was another day of sunshine and scattered showers, feeling cool in a northerly wind.

Wales diary of highlights

After a showery start, much of the month was dry and sunny, with some warm days as high pressure became established. The last week was generally cooler and more unsettled with rain or showers.

The mean temperature for the month was 0.8 °C above average, with maximum temperatures particularly high relative to average, but minima near or slightly below. Rainfall was only 39% of average, and it was especially dry towards the south-east. Sunshine was above average everywhere, with 142% of average for Wales overall; only April 2007 was sunnier in a series from 1929.

1st to 3rd:

The 1st saw patchy rain in the northern half of Wales from late morning onwards with brighter, sunnier conditions further south. The 2nd was dull with patchy rain through the day, becoming heavier but more

showery by evening. It was cloudy on the 3rd but drier with temperatures increasing into the mid-teens.

4th to 23rd:

The next few days were dry, with some sunshine and patchy cloud on the 4th. Warm with some sunshine from the 5th to the 7th, and a maximum of 19.9 °C recorded at Usk (Monmouthshire) on the 7th. The 8th and 9th began with patchy fog but became dry and warm with some sunshine. After early sunshine on the 10th, cloud moved in from the west later in the day. The 11th started with rain, soon clearing to leave a cooler but dry and sunny day. There was rain, with strong to gale-force winds, in the north during the early hours of the 12th with the rain band moving south-east by the afternoon. The 13th was dry but cloudy. Warmer on the 14th with more sunshine at times. It became very warm in the south-east on the 15th, with 20.6 °C at Cardiff Bute Park (South Glamorgan), but further north it was duller and much cooler with patchy fog at times. Warm again on the 16th with some sunshine. The 17th was slightly cooler than recent days and cloudier. Dry and sunny from the 18th to the 23rd with some warm days; 21.3 °C was recorded at Porthmadog (Gwynedd) on the 21st.

24th to 30th:

Some patchy rain or showers in the afternoon of the 24th with little or no sunshine. The 25th continued cloudy with patchy rain in the afternoon. Generally dry and sunny on the 26th. The 27th was sunny, but some showers developed. Mainly dry on the 28th with some sunshine, but a few isolated showers later. A band of rain crossed from west to east in the early hours of the 29th, becoming brighter but with showers later in the afternoon. Showers on the 30th became more isolated, with sunny and dry conditions developing.

Scotland diary of highlights

The month began rather unsettled and showery, but high pressure then brought a more settled period. After a short colder and wetter spell, pressure rose again and it became settled once more from mid-month, but the last week was more showery once more, and turned cold enough for fresh snowfalls in many places.

The mean temperature for the month was 0.2 °C above the long-term average. Rainfall was near average for many places, but slightly drier towards the east and south, giving an overall figure of 87%. It was the sunniest April since 1942, with an overall total of 148% of average.

1st to 3rd:

Most areas saw frequent showers of rain, sleet and snow on the 1st, with a more general area of rain edging into the south-west later on. Apart from a few scattered showers in the north, most places were dry on the 2nd until rain edged into the west later. The rain continued overnight for most areas but gradually cleared to the east during the 3rd.

4th to 10th:

A few scattered showers lingered in the north early on the 4th, but it was dry everywhere by the afternoon. Dry, sunny and warm for many on the 5th, with 20.7 °C recorded at Aboyne (Aberdeenshire), but cloudier in the west. Mostly dry and warm again on the 6th but with patchy rain in the north and some fog in the south. Rain in the north for most of the 7th but dry further south. Apart from patchy fog in the west at first, the 8th was generally dry and bright. Dry, warm and sunny for most areas on the 9th after some patchy early morning fog, with the temperature reaching 20.6 °C at Fyvie Castle (Aberdeenshire). Warm again on the 10th but cloud increased from the west bringing patchy rain to the north and west by the afternoon.

11th to 15th:

It turned cold overnight into the 11th and it was a windy day with rain in the east soon clearing but blustery showers, occasionally of hail, spreading across from the west. Morning rain in the south on the 12th was followed by blustery showers spreading from the north. After a dry start for most on the 13th, rain and strong

winds spread to most areas; the rain was especially heavy in the north-west where 60.4 mm was recorded at Achnagart (Highland). There were strong winds across the country on the 14th with rain, heavy in the north-west but lighter and patchier further south and east. Rain in the south on the 15th cleared away quickly southwards, and the rest of the day was showery with bright intervals.

16th to 23rd:

It was mostly dry and bright in the south on the 16th as pressure started to build, but cloudier in the north with some scattered showers. Mostly dry with bright intervals on the 17th, apart from a few isolated showers in the far north. Remaining dry and bright on the 18th, 19th and 20th. Most places continued fine and warm on the 21st, but it was cloudier and cooler in the north-west and the Northern Isles with some light rain or drizzle at times. The 22nd was dry, bright and warm also, except in the north-west, with some drizzle in Shetland, and it was particularly warm with 22.6 °C recorded at Aberfeldy (Perth and Kinross). Mainly dry, bright and warm in the south on the 23rd but again cloudier in the north with some patchy rain and drizzle.

24th to 30th:

Dry at first for most of the country on the 24th, but with early rain in the far north, and then later in the day rain reached the south of the country and spread north. Early on the 25th this rain cleared quickly southwards, introducing much colder air and bringing some sunshine in the south but showers in the north. The 26th began dry and bright but cold, with rain and blustery wintry showers, spreading from the north by midday to most areas, giving fresh snow cover over mountains and even at lower levels to locations such as Braemar (Aberdeenshire). After another cold and mainly bright start on the 27th, it was breezy with rain, falling as sleet or snow on higher ground, in most areas later. It was dry and bright at first in the east on the 28th, but increasing winds brought blustery showers into the west, spreading to all areas through the day. It continued unsettled on the 29th with rain or showers, occasionally wintry, for all areas as well as isolated thunder. The 30th was another day of scattered heavy showers and occasionally hail for most areas, these dying out in places later.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

The first few days brought rain and showers, followed by a spell of dry, fine weather. After a few days of cooler and unsettled conditions, there was another spell of fine weather with some warm, sunny days. The last week was unsettled and much colder with some sharp frosts.

The mean temperature for the month was 0.1 °C above the long-term average; maxima were on average a degree above and minima a degree below normal. It was a rather dry and very sunny month, with 81% of average rainfall, and the sunshine total of 141% of average making it the equal-sunniest April in a series from 1929.

1st to 3rd:

There were frequent showers on the 1st, some heavy and wintry, feeding in on strong north-westerly winds, merging into longer spells of rain during the afternoon and evening. The 2nd again saw rain for most areas, especially in the afternoon and evening. Patchy rain at first on the 3rd but mostly dry later.

4th to 10th:

High pressure built from the south, giving a dry day on the 4th, and it was dry again on the 5th and 6th, feeling warm in the sunshine. It remained dry, bright and warm for the 7th, 8th and 9th, with any mist or fog patches clearing during the mornings. Most of the 10th was dry also, but rain began to edge in from the west later.

11th to 15th:

Overnight rain cleared on the 11th to leave a bright day with just a few showers, mainly in the north, and it felt cooler with a fresh westerly wind. Overnight rain cleared during the morning of the 12th leaving behind sunshine and scattered showers. Some patchy rain late in the morning of the 13th, becoming mainly dry but rather cloudy. After some early rain on the 14th, it became mainly dry and bright. A further spell of overnight rain cleared during the morning of the 15th, to leave a dry and bright afternoon.

16th to 23rd:

The 16th to 19th were largely dry and sunny. Scattered showers at first on the 20th soon cleared, to leave another fine and sunny day. The 21st was a dry day with good spells of sunshine. The 22nd and 23rd were sunny away from the north coast and became warm inland, with temperatures reaching 20 °C, but much cooler along the north coast.

24th to 30th:

A dry start on the 24th but patchy rain spread from the south-west later, becoming persistent and heavy at times overnight. This rain cleared southwards through the morning of the 25th to leave behind mainly dry but much colder weather. After a widespread frost, the 26th saw a mixture of sunshine and showers, including some hail. It was very cold at first on the 27th, with Katesbridge (County Down) recording a minimum of -8.0 °C, followed by a day of frequent showers, some wintry and prolonged. The 28th saw further sunshine and showers, then more persistent rain in the evening. On the 29th frequent showers, wintry at times, were accompanied by thunder in places. The 30th was a drier day with good spells of sunshine.

Last updated: 19 February 2016

Met Office